

August 8 2010 Sermon

Luke. 12:22-34 ²² And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁶ If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. ³⁰ For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. ³² "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that

do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Today we need to talk about something that is going on that all of you are a part of. In our country we have all learned to rely on the food chain to supply our needs. What we really mean by food chain is not what we learned in biology class, but the food chain for most of us is; the one who gets a good education, gets a good job. The one who gets a good job, gets the most money. The one with the most money gets the most stuff, and the one with the most stuff wins!

You depend on the system to feed and clothe you. You have learned to rely on the economy so you can work and earn as

much as you set your goals on. You have learned to rely on your job, your business, your investments, your retirement account, the equity in your house, the government's policies to supply food, clothing, and security. You have the luxury of being able to choose what you eat, and select the amount of cholesterol, fiber, calories, omega 3's, anti-oxidants you eat. You can choose between organic and non-organic foods; processed or unprocessed. This is a luxury that 90% of the people of the earth do not enjoy.

You don't have to worry about having something to wear, rather you have the problem of making up your minds while choosing which shirt, or which dress, or which shoes to wear today. You don't worry having clothes, you worry about fashions, designer brands, what image you want to project to your friends and how to build a wardrobe that will project that image. A luxury that few of the earth's inhabitants enjoy.

Up until now you have been like the rich farmer that Jesus talked about, whose harvest was so large he had to tear down his barns and build larger ones, and then could sit back and eat, drink

and be merry for many years without having to worry about where his food and clothing would come from. You just took it for granted that there will always be food and clothing.

But recently things have changed. Those institutions that you have learned to rely on for your food and clothing are now shaky and collapsing. Your home is losing value. The market place is no longer reliable. Jobs are disappearing. Your investments and retirement funds are vanishing, and the government, no longer able to supply your needs, is taxing the very life blood out of your pocketbook. The economic food chain

is no longer functioning. More and more of you are finding that instead of choosing the healthiest foods from a supermarket full of variety, you now are struggling just to buy any food at all. Instead of finding your dream job, you are thankful to have any job. Instead of owning your dream home, you are one step from homelessness. Main street has failed you. Wall Street has failed you. Washington has failed you.

Worry and anxiety have taken the place of your smug, self-confident security. Fear, worry, anxiety have taken over your lives. Your insecurity grows as the markets become insecure.

Your anxiety goes up as the value of your house goes down.
Your jobs collapse in proportion to the collapse of the economy.

Jesus understands the problems of our modern life. He knew poverty and he experienced what it means to be deprived of the basics necessities of life, yet He says, “Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. Life is more than food and the body more than clothing...O, you of little faith.”

That’s the key: You worry because you lack faith. And lack of faith is sin against the First Commandment. Worry is just

another symptom of a spiritual problem, it is NOT fearing, loving and trusting God above all things.

It seems as if Monday morning we forget all about what happens here on Sunday morning. Have you not heard? When God created Adam and Eve he blessed them and said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.” And later he said, “Every beast of the earth, and every bird of the heavens, and everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea are delivered into your hand.

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you.” God gave you his entire creation. God is the giver of your food.

Then, God killed an animal and from its skin he made clothing for Adam and Eve. From the hand of God you receive your clothing and everything you need. He knows you have need of all these things and he is the One who provides all things. He takes care of his people. If he feeds the birds of the air he will feed you who are created in his image. If he clothes the grass of the field which will soon be cut and thrown into the fire, how much more he will clothe you who are of greater value. Truly “the eyes

of all look to Him, and He gives them their food in due season. He opens his hand; and He satisfies the desire of every living thing.”

When his people wandered in the wilderness, He caused manna to rain down in the morning for bread, and in the evening he spread quail over the land for meat. He brought forth water from the rock. Yes, God takes care of his people. He will not leave them without provision.

The people of the Old Testament understood all these things. For them every meal was a sacrament; they ate every

meal with sacramental reverence and ritual because they understood that God provided it. Every meal was a sacred meal.

“Do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the pagans seek after these things and your Father knows you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

“Life is more than food and the body is more than clothing.” The physical side of man does **not** exhaust all of what it means to be man. Jesus said the same when he told Satan, “Man does not

live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” The Hebrews ate manna from heaven and drank water from a rock: the heavenly manna was Christ whose flesh we too eat at the Altar of the Lord. Water gushed from the rock, and the rock was Christ from whom we drink the life giving water of his blood that washes away our sins.

Seek his kingdom; here in the Sacrament of the Altar we are joined to his kingdom. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Amanda and Roy, today you will receive the bread of life and drink the drink that

quenches your thirst for righteousness. Today Christ joins you to his body and you are strengthened in your communion with the body of Christ. He who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him, and today you are joined to the Lord at the foot of the cross as you eat his body sacrificed for you and drink his blood poured out for you. Your sinful flesh is joined to Jesus so that your sin is absorbed into his body and is crucified on the cross. His holy flesh is joined to you so that his perfect righteousness covers your sins and makes you holy and blameless before his Father. In this holy eating and drinking you are united with

Christ's church, and are formed and molded into the communion of saints, being built together into a dwelling place for God, and grown into a holy temple in the Lord.

Here, Amanda, at the supper of the Lord, is where you are filled with faith and hope and love so that these three gifts abide in you. Here, Roy, at the table of the Lord, you dine on the flesh of Christ who suffered in the flesh, and whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. That very flesh in which Christ suffered is what you will dine on, so that you no longer live for

human passions but for the will of God. Here Amanda and Roy, your hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied.

Therefore, since it is God's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, instead of worry about what you shall eat and what clothes you will put on, give to the needy that they have food and clothing. In so doing, you are providing yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old. The poor are your greatest treasures, for by your love and compassion for the needy, you are heaping up treasures in heaven that do not fail, where no thief

and no moth destroy. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Today, you come to the Lord's Table to receive the true food and clothing. Jesus himself is true food. He who eats his flesh and drinks his blood has eternal life, and he will raise you up on the Last Day. Jesus is also true clothing, for whoever is joined to Christ is clothed in his perfect righteousness. Your spots and wrinkles are covered and hidden under the perfect holiness of Jesus.

So, when you get up on Monday morning to go about your daily business, why do you worry about food or clothing? Here, on Sunday morning you are fed with the food and drink of the gospel and you are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Do not seek after the things the pagans seek, for your Father knows you need them and he is the one who provides all things. Life is more than food and the body is more than clothing.

Amen.

With a firm faith hold fast to the riches of God's grace and joyfully give thanks to his mercy forever and ever. Amen.